

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

CRIME

Mr. McCONNELL. While Washington Democrats spent 2021 distracted by their reckless taxing-and-spending spree, violent criminals were preying on the American people. Millions of Americans' neighborhoods descended into chaos and violence around them.

After the nationwide murder rate saw its biggest jump in more than 100 years in 2020, at least 12 major cities set their own alltime homicide records in 2021. Rates of carjackings have doubled, tripled, and even quadrupled in major metro areas.

My hometown of Louisville set a new alltime murder record last year of 188 homicides. Twenty-four of the victims were children. At one point last year, a staggering 65 percent of our homicides were going unsolved. Louisville is now averaging one carjacking every 42 hours. Yesterday, I hosted the FBI special agent in charge of the Louisville field office for a meeting here in the Capitol. We discussed these issues at length.

One survey last year found that Americans believe violent crime is the No. 1 major crisis facing our country. More citizens called violent crime a major crisis than COVID. When Americans were asked about President Biden's handling of law enforcement and criminal justice, the President polls almost 20 points underwater.

The American people know this crime wave is not some spontaneous event. It has been fed and fueled in multiple ways by the Democratic Party's far-left turn. For example, liberal activists and many elected Democrats have spent almost 2 years trying to smear—smear—the entire profession of policing with the actions of a few bad actors.

We know that anti-police culture wars invite more crime. It is a fact. A prominent scholar—who, incidentally, was the youngest African-American professor to ever get tenure at Harvard—has proven that anti-police outcry directly results in more crime, including homicides.

Many jurisdictions have entertained financial attacks on police departments to match the rhetorical attacks. Literally just yesterday, a prominent House Democrat insisted to the press that the far left will not be dropping or diluting their message of “defund the police.”

Meanwhile, our brave men and women in law enforcement are literally—literally—under attack. While too many politicians take aim at our brave police officers in a political sense, violent criminals are taking aim at them in a literal sense. The number of cop killings shot up nearly 60 percent last year to a two-decade high.

In Louisville, Jefferson County Sheriff's Deputy Brandon Shirley was shot and killed last summer. It is believed he was ambushed while wearing his uniform.

The streets of New York City were packed full with heroes a few days ago as fellow officers mourned two of their colleagues who had been shot and killed.

It is not just regular citizens going about their normal days who need this violent crime epidemic to stop; our brave men and women in blue also need very badly for it to stop. But, within the justice system, leftwing activists have insinuated themselves into prosecutorial roles throughout America and are making “soft on crime” actually their official policy.

The State's attorney in Baltimore announced last year she intended to stop prosecuting minor drug and prostitution cases.

New York City's new district attorney said last month he would not pursue charges for marijuana misdemeanors, trespassing, and resisting arrest, among others. After a huge backlash, he tried to walk some of this back.

Chain stores like Walgreens have had to close locations in San Francisco because constant, unpunished theft and shoplifting have become a fact of life in that city.

Another example is almost too sad and ironic for words. In Wisconsin last November, a repeat offender who was out on bond drove his car into a Christmas parade and murdered six people. His victims included an 8-year-old child and a group of grandmothers.

Well, one jurisdiction over in Milwaukee County has one of the most prominent soft-on-crime liberal prosecutors in the entire country. He has spent years waging a national campaign urging prosecutors to actually go easy on repeat criminals like this killer. A few years back, he even admitted soft-on-crime policies would cost innocent lives but said he was willing to make the trade.

Here is what he had to say:

Is there going to be an individual I divert, or I put into [a] treatment program, who's going to go out and kill somebody? You bet. Guaranteed. It's guaranteed to happen. It does not invalidate the overall approach.

These backward, pro-crime attitudes aren't just infecting local DAs' offices; they also seem to be largely defining the Biden Department of Justice. Rachael Rollins is the former Massachusetts DA who spent her last job trying to wipe entire categories of crimes off the enforcement rolls. This earned her a promotion to U.S. attorney from President Biden, which every Senate Democrat supported. There is Vanita Gupta, now an Associate Attorney General, who had previously advocated for sweeping drug decriminalization and expressed her support for efforts to “decrease police budgets.” There is Kristen Clarke, also confirmed by Senate Democrats to work at DOJ, who

echoed calls to “invest less in police.” These are President Biden's picks to top jobs at Main Justice.

I just had to place a hold on the nominee to be U.S. attorney for Minnesota because the person recently acting in that job recommended an unusually soft sentence below the minimum guideline to a convicted fatal arsonist because the arsonist was taking part in a far-left political riot at the time. I will need written assurance the nominee to succeed this person will not continue this jaw-dropping practice and lessen criminals' sentences so long as the political violence they commit happens to be leftwing.

The modern Democratic Party has convinced itself that order—order—is actually oppression and anarchy is actually compassion. This is totally wrong. Tolerating lawlessness and anarchy is not compassionate. It doesn't help vulnerable communities for politicians to passively watch them devolve into literal war zones. The actual residents of these communities know this best of all.

Last summer, even after months of anti-police rhetoric from the left, when a poll asked the residents of Detroit about their concerns, almost five times more people said public safety than police reform. It was even more lopsided among African-American residents. They named public safety eight times more than police reform.

Last summer, NPR interviewed a man who had committed terrible crimes as a young adult, served time, turned his life around, and now works with young men in prison. The reporter asked how he had gotten caught up in criminal violence. Where did his childhood veer off course?

Here was the man's explanation—a direct quote. Here is what he said:

It was my environment. . . . When I go outside every day, as soon as I walk out my front door, I'm entering a war zone . . . from sun-up to sundown, robberies and murders and carjacking and extortion . . . [I] became a product of my environment.

So this man's problem was not an evil justice system that was out to get him; it wasn't that his neighborhood had an excess of law and order; the problem was a lack of—a lack of—law and order.

It is not compassionate to let vulnerable kids grow up in war zones because Democrats feel bad putting violent criminals in prison, where they belong.

Let me say that again. It is not compassionate to let vulnerable kids grow up in war zones because Democrats feel guilty putting violent criminals behind bars, where they belong.

Neither is it compassionate to make innocent, law-abiding citizens across America live in fear because liberal public servants won't do their jobs.

The answer to this crimewave isn't slashing law enforcement budgets, it isn't replacing cops with social workers, and it isn't far-left gun grabbers coming after the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens. Here is the answer: Elected officials need to drop the